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Was the CIA Fomenting a Revolt in Albania in 1950?

CPYRGHT New York Times Service

LONDON — The Sunday Times said today that Harold (Kim) Philby, the senior British intelligence officer who defected to the Soviet Union in 1963, betrayed to the Russians a Anglo-American plan to foment anti-Soviet uprisings in Albania in 1950.

The newspaper said that Philby, who went to Washington in 1949 as liaison man between Britain's Secret Intelligence Service and the Central Intelligence Agency, was in charge of the joint operation, which it called "one of the most extraordinary secrets of the Cold War."

After organizing "a 'Committee of Free Albanians,' based in Italy, and apparently a front organization for recruiting guerrillas," the newspaper said, the operation was launched in the spring of 1950 with guerrilla bands slipping "up into the mountains and over the border into Albania."

WITHIN A month, according to The Times, which gave no source for its account, about 150 guerrillas "were either killed or captured," and "150 survivors struggled back into Greece."

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"The Russians just seemed to know they were coming," the newspaper said. It added: "The Americans were uneasily convinced of treachery. And what few indications there were pointed to Philby, they thought. But in Britain, the SIS appeared not to have accepted even the evidence of treachery."

The newspaper continued to focus on Soviet penetration of British intelligence and accused the SIS of standing by Philby, who is alleged to have spied for the Soviet Union for 30 years, with "an extraordinary, apparently inexplicable determination."

THE NEWSPAPER reported several incidents that should have thrown doubts on Philby's loyalties, detailing one that occurred in Istanbul in 1945 after he had become head of British counter-Soviet espionage.

A man who gave his name as Volkov offered to sell information on Russian espionage operations, including the

names of Soviet agents operating in government departments in London, according to The Times.

The man, who said he was ostensibly the newly-appointed Russian consul in Istanbul, claimed he was, in fact head of Soviet Intelligence for Turkey, agreed to wait 21 days for a decision from London, the article said.

The account said Volkov was told that "if he had not heard by the evening of the 21st day, he would assume the deal was off."

After several reminders to London, The Times said, "the diplomat who had interviewed Volkov had still heard nothing, and was almost frantic."

On the morning of the 21st day, according to the newspaper, Philby arrived. He "produced, casually, an almost incredible excuse," the paper said, saying, "Sorry, old man; it would have interfered with leave arrangements."

THE BRITISH official told The Times that he said at the time "that either Philby was criminally incompetent, or he was a Soviet agent himself."

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